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The star of the North

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STAR OF THE NORTH.

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UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

THE

STAR OF THE NORTH.

A Drama,

IN THREE ACTS.

ADAPTED FROM THE FRENCH,

BY

Thomas William
T. W. ROBERTSON,
III
AUTHOR OF

Caste; Ours; Society; M.P.; Dreams; School; Play; Home; David Garrick; Jocrisse the Juggler; Chevalier de St. George; Ruy Blas; Sea of Ice; Noemie; Ladies' Battle; Duke's Daughter; Not at all Jealous; Birds of Prey; An Evening's Entertainment; Cantab; Two Gay Deceivers; &c., &c.

THOMAS HAILES LACY,
THEATRICAL PUBLISHER,
LONDON.

PR
5232
R5A74

Characters.

PETER MICHAELOFF, *a Journeyman Carpenter* (*Lead*).

DANILOVITZ, *a Pastrycook* (*Light Comedian*).

GRITZENKO, *a Kalmuc Tartar* (*Character rôle*).

REYNOLDS, *a Tavern Keeper.*

GENERAL TCHEREMETOFF.

COLONEL YERMALOFF.

ISMAILOFF, *a Cossack.*

GEORGE SKAROVINSKI, *a Joiner and Musician* (*Walking Gentleman*).

CATHERINE, *his Sister* (*Lead*).

PRASCOVIA, *his Betrothed* (*Juvenile*).

NATHALIE, EKIMVRIA } *Vivandieres* (*Soubrettes*).

☞ The Music of the Chorus and Duett is the same as in the Opera of "*L'Etoile du Nord.*"

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22.1.57

[This Drama is the Property of T. H. Lacy].

THE STAR OF THE NORTH.

ACT I.

SCENE.—*A Village near Wiborg, in the Gulf of Finland; the Cottage of George Skarovinski,* R.; *staircase outside the house conducting to interior; church porch,* L.; *rocks at the back; horizon.*

CARPENTERS *and* OTHERS *discovered reposing during the heat of the day—some sitting, some lying down—their* WIVES *and* DAUGHTERS *bring them their food in baskets—*PETER, C., *before a joiner's bench—he is the only person working.*

Chorus.

From toil reposing,
Our labour closing;
We sit beneath the verdant shade.
Our work now ending,
Ere homeward wending
Where sweet repose is happy made,
Where sweet, &c.

1ST WORKMAN. Hollo, Peter! won't you drink?

PETER. (*advancing to him, then stopping as if recollecting himself*) No, no! I'll prove to Catherine that I can go without drink—and without a quarrel—umph!—it's devilish hard—no matter—No. (*aloud*) No, thank you.

Enter DANILOVITZ, *with a tray-full of cakes,* L.

DANIL. Hot! hot! hot! all hot! They are so nice, and full of spice, that everybody buys 'em. Here you are! buy! buy! buy! they are just up! hot! hot! hot! all hot! (*he serves the* WORKMEN) But I don't see Catherine, the pretty little suttler.

1ST WORKMAN. She has not left her mother's cottage yet.

2ND WORKMAN. Peter is waiting for her, I know.

1ST WORKMAN. Is he in love with her?

2ND WORKMAN. I'm sure he is,

DANIL. (*laughing*) In love?

1ST WORKMEN. But it is no use. (ALL *laugh*)

PETER. (*aside*) Oh! I should like to put myself in a passion.

1ST WORKMAN. Come, I'll give you a toast. Here's our native land. Sweden!

ALL. (*but* PETER *and* DANILOVITZ) Sweden! (*they drink*)

1ST WORKMAN. Now here's another. To our King, the Great Charles the Twelfth.

ALL. Charles the Twelfth! (*they drink*)

2ND WORKMAN. And may the Russians, whom he is always beating, find a tomb in the land he governs. (*all drink*)

1ST WORKMAN. (*to* DANILOVITZ) But you don't drink?

DANIL. But I *will* drink. Here's to the Czar, Peter the First!

ALL THE WORKMEN. } What? Drink our toast!

DANIL. Never! (*they are about to rush on him when* PETER *throws himself between them*)

PETER. Hold! Dare to lay a finger on him, and I'll crush you.

WORKMEN. Kill them both! Down with them! (*as they are about to rush on them, bell rings for them to resume their work—they pause*)

1ST WORKMAN. There, there! don't fight, there's good fellows, no matter what country you come from—don't fight!

WOMEN. No, no! don't fight.

The WOMEN *coax the* MEN *off*, R.—ALL *exit but* DANILOVITZ *and* PETER, *who remain* C.

DANIL. (*striking him on the shoulder*) You are a Muscovite.

PETER. Yes.

DANIL. Then how is it you are in Finland?

PETER. I only meant to pass through it, but one day when I threw myself into a rage, I fell down as if I had been struck by a thunderbolt.

DANIL. Were you alone?

PETER. No; the workmen who were with me, left me, abandoned me, and a young girl, who lives there, took care of me.

DANIL. But when you got better, why didn't you leave the place at once?

PETER. I like the place.

DANIL. And you like the girl who took care of you?

PETER. Perhaps.

DANIL. The workmen say you are in love with her.

PETER. Perhaps.

DANIL. They say too that you have pitched your bench there, (*pointing*) because she comes here every day to sell brandy and rum to them.

PETER. The truth is, she sells such capital rum.

DANIL. They say too, that in order to see her you go every day to her brother's house, George Skarovinski, the joiner and minstrel of the village, to learn to play the air that she likes best, upon the flute. By St. Nicholas——

PETER. And if I do, what is it to you? You're very inquisitive—who are you?

DANIL. Danilovitz, a Muscovite like yourself; a master pastrycook; but I can't do much business, so I shall go back to my native land, and enter into the service of the Emperor, Peter the First.

PETER. Bah, he's a brute!

DANIL. Perhaps he is, but he has a heart, he has courage, he inspires his soldiers, who, at the sound of the Holy March, could conquer anything.

PETER. What is the Holy March?

DANIL. The march the guard played at Pultowa, the march Peter composed himself.

PETER. Is he a musician?

DANIL. Oh, he's a jack-of-all-trades.

PETER. So much the worse.

DANIL. So much the better, for perhaps among the number, some one of 'em may suit me, and as I am ambitious——

PETER. (*looking at him with astonishment*) You ambitious!—so am I.

DANIL. Let us fight our way together.

PETER. Would you follow me?

DANIL. To the devil!

PETER. The very place I think I'm bound to.

DANIL. (*taking his hand*) Then you are my man.

PETER. And you shall be mine, a soldier first, then an officer.

DANIL. Then general?

PETER. (*laughing*) Perhaps a prince.

DANIL. Why not?

PETER. Why not?

DANIL. Why not—riches, honour, luxury, power!

PETER. We are friends then.

DANIL. Friends. (*shaking hands*)

PETER. Fast friends. *Exit* DANILOVITZ, L. He too is ambitious. Well;—to be ambitious may be of service, to be in love is of no use at all. No, I won't be in love, I won't; and to prove it, I'll quit this place without seeing her. (*looking at cottage*) Their shutters are still up; they must be up and stirring by this. (*flute heard in the*

cottage) No; there's my music master playing Catherine's favourite air. (*he takes flute from his bench and plays*)

GEORGE *appears on the staircase*, L.

GEORGE. Bravo, bravo! My pupil does me honour.

PETER. I'm glad you think so, because I am about to quit this place; so before I go I'll take my last lesson. (*going towards staircase*)

GEORGE. (*coming down*) Do; for my sister Catherine has gone out.

PETER. (*stopping*) Catherine gone out?

GEORGE. (*whispering*) Yes; she went out alone, early this morning.

PETER. What for?

GEORGE. That's a secret—a love affair; but I don't mind telling you.

PETER. No! I should like to hear. Speak quickly.

GEORGE. My sister and I, you know, are not of this country, but we come from the borders of the Ukraine, between the Dneiper and the Volga. Our mother, who was a fortune-teller, left us orphans when we were about ten or eleven years old—left us without any other inheritance than the talent for reading the stars, and singing the wild songs common to the country, which talent we have never forgotten.

PETER. (*impatiently*) Well.

GEORGE. When my mother died, she confided me to the care of my sister, because she was the elder, and because of the two my sister was more of a man than I was. I was afraid of everything—she was afraid of nothing; so, singing for our living, we somehow or other one day found ourselves here in Finland; that was about two years ago. Then Catherine said that we couldn't always get our living by singing and fortune-telling, but that we must choose a trade; so I chose that of joiner for six days in the week, and minstrel the seventh. Then you know I take in pupils. I took you in for instance.

PETER. (*impatiently*) Well, but Catherine?

GEORGE. She then took to being a suttler; and ever since she bought a cask of Dantzic brandy her fortune was made, for——

PETER. (*impatient*) But about this love affair you spoke of?

GEORGE. I'm coming to it. In the village, at the sign of the "Charles the Great," there is a tavernkeeper, who hates us, who has got a pretty niece called Prascovia—the prettiest girl in the place. She hasn't got a farthing—neither have I; but without mentioning it, for this last year I've been dying of love for her.

PETER. You have! 'Tis your love affair, then. Why didn't you tell me so before?

GEORGE. I never told anybody; but Catherine found it out; so she went out this morning, telling me that I needn't tear my hair off my head any more, for she should soon be back with good news.

PETER. (*gaily*) Well, well—wait till she does come back, then; and take one lesson in the meantime.

GEORGE. (*going to the table underneath the staircase, where there are bottles and glasses*) I'd rather take something else—a glass of Geneva, for instance.

PETER. I promised to give up drinking Geneva; but to Catherine—one glass!

GEORGE. (*filling*) To Catherine!

PETER. (*with animation*) To Catherine! Fill again.

Enter CATHERINE *at back*, R., *dressed as a suttler, carrying a small barrel of rum.*

CATH. Very pretty! A nice lover you are, to amuse yourself by drinking at the very time that one is arranging your marriage!

GEORGE. Well, what news? What said old Reynolds?

CATH. I found him behind his counter, with his nightcap on his head and his pipe in his mouth, seated like a king upon his throne. "Sire," said I, addressing him as if I were an ambassador, "my brother aspires to the hand of your niece." His majesty seemed to entertain the idea favourably, and so we opened negociations; but as you know treaties for peace, unless very cleverly conducted, generally lead to war, I had to use a great deal of diplomacy. His majesty wanted us to rebuild his tavern—to enlarge it; in short, he wanted everything his own way—for his own aggrandisement, as every other king does. At last, I settled all; the negociations are completed, the contract ratified, the affair finished. Come, confess—ain't I a clever diplomatist? (*with gaiety and animation*)

PETER. (*aside*) She is, indeed!

GEORGE. But how can you comply with conditions so——

CATH. (*striking the barrel of rum*) Hasn't this been for the last two years a mine of gold for me—and all by just turning this little spigot?

GEORGE. Well!

CATH. And if I hope for fortune, 'tis not for myself, but for thee, my brother, whom our dead mother commanded me to protect. My savings shall be thy dowry, and thou shalt wed her thou lovest.

GEORGE. But I can't let you throw away all your savings upon me. Some day you'll be married——

CATH. Married! Me! (*she shakes her head*)

GEORGE. To some fine young fellow—some clever workman, who'll love you truly.

CATH. (*coldly*) I know none such.

PETER. That's not true, Catherine.

CATH. (*disdainfully*) Oh! are you there still, Master Peter?

PETER. You well know there is one who loves you.

CATH. Love! People have no time to love, who pass the day in quarrelling and getting drunk.

PETER. That's what I used to do; but I have sworn——

CATH. Yes, yesterday you swore that you would never again quarrel or get drunk; and just now I met Danilovitz, the pastrycook, who told me that you and he were about to fight all the workmen in the port.

PETER. They sought a quarrel with us; but before that they asked me to drink, and I refused them. I said, "Drink—no—never again!"

CATH. And 'twas for the same reason, I suppose, that I found you there with a glass in your hand.

PETER. Perdition!

CATH. And now you want to quarrel.

GEORGE. (*to* CATHERINE) It's your fault.

PETER. Of course it is.

GEORGE. And if you didn't curb him so tightly——

PETER. Just what I was going to say.

CATH. George, do you remember what our mother said to me on the night that she died, when she sought to read our fate in the stars. "Catherine," said she, "thy Star shines brilliantly in the North. For thee there waits an extraordinary destiny."

PETER. (*interested*) Indeed!

CATH. "Thou shalt meet with one who shall by his own merit elevate thee to a high position. The grand destiny, which he will partly owe to thee, he shall share with thee."

PETER. Thy mother told thee that!

CATH. (*to* PETER) And when you lay without sense or motion at the door of death, and I watched by to see if a spark of life yet dwelt in thee—as you returned to consciousness and your eyes opened, there was something noble, elevated in your look—a lightning in your eyes, that made me think, "That is no common man!"

PETER. You thought that?

CATH. Yes; I thought so *then*—but now——

PETER. You don't think so?

CATH. No.

PETER. Why not? Tell me—tell me. I wish it.

CATH. (*after a pause*) That's a word too often on your lips. You wish too quickly to will with perseverance. You wished

to be a carpenter; and you hardly know enough to be a joiner. You wished to be a musician; you have already made some little progress; doubtless you will soon be disgusted, and abandon it. You begin everything—you finish nothing. You are always expecting—never realising. You have energy and vigour, but neither patience nor perseverance.

PETER. But I will have. (*forcibly*) I feel that I have persevered.

CATH. No; all that you feel is anger.

PETER. (*containing himself*) Don't say that again.

CATH. You can't even listen with patience while I tell you the truth.

PETER. No, no—'tis not that; but to see you so calm and quiet makes me furious. I can hardly tell what prevents me——

CATH. From striking me? (*proudly*) You are not yet my lord and master.

PETER. I can't help my passion, Catherine—it's too much for me. I shall never be able to conquer it.

CATH. The man who cannot control himself can neither be a kind husband or a good master.

PETER. (*furiously*) This is too much, Catherine! (*controlling himself*) You are wrong, Catherine. I'll prove to you that I have a will of my own, and that I can maintain a fixed purpose. I came this morning to bid you farewell.

CATH. (*with emotion*) Ah!

PETER. My last farewell. I'll leave this country—I'll never return to it—never love you more—I will forget you.

CATH. (*with emotion*) Be it so.

PETER. You know not, Catherine, what you are losing.

CATH. I can easily find a man with as bad a temper as yours. You will have some trouble to find a friend as true, as honest, as sincere as I have been.

Music.—Enter PRASCOVIA *quickly*, R.—*she looks frightened.*

GEORGE. Prascovia!

PRAS. Oh, I'm so frightened! Oh, how my heart beats—oh, how my heart beats! Oh, I have run so!

ALL. What's the matter?

PRAS. Oh, I am so frightened! (*drums heard outside*, R.—PRASCOVIA *faints in* CATHERINE'S *arms*)

GEORGE. I'll go and see. (*going*)

PRAS. (*coming to directly*) No, no—don't go—I'll tell you. The advance guard of the Tartar troops, commanded by General Tcheremetoff, is approaching the village.

CATH. Well?

PRAS. Well, a lot of Tartars—Kalmucs—they'll kill and burn us all! and as for us poor women—oh!

PETER. We shall see. (*coming down*)

CATH. Ah! you're not gone yet.

PETER. You are in danger—I remain by your side.

CATH. (*holding her hand out to him*) Thanks!

PRAS. (*looking off*, R.) Here they come!

GEORGE. Let us run away!

PETER. (*seizing a hatchet*) What for? I'll stop them!

CATH. (*stopping him and looking at him*) There again is the look I spoke of. You have courage, but not common sense. If you run at them with that hatchet, they'll massacre us all, and they'll begin with you.

PETER. I don't care.

CATH. But if I do? (*tenderly*)

PETER. (*with joy*) What say you?

GEORGE. (*looking off*, R.) They are here?

CATH. (*looking off*) Ah! they are the Tartars of the Ukraine. I will save you.

PETER. How?

CATH. Not by force of arms. Quick! bottles and glasses. (PRASCOVIA *and* GEORGE *run into house*, R.)

PETER. What are you about to do?

CATH. That's my business. (*going towards house*)

PETER. I'll follow you.

CATH. (*imperiously*) I forbid it!

She goes up staircase and exit.

PETER. Singular girl! but I will watch her, yes, were it only to see how she will, unaided, put to flight the Tartars of the Ukraine. *Exit* PETER, L. U. E.

Music, drums and trumpets—Enter GRITZENKO *and a party of* KALMUC TARTARS, R.

TARTARS. Huzza! No one here! Plunder! plunder! booty! Blood! &c. (*immense confusion*)

GRIT. Sons of the desert! children of the Ukraine, we are here for plunder!

TARTARS. Huzza! huzza!

GRIT. If we want a light for our pipes, we have but to set fire to a palace.

TARTARS. Huzza! Plunder! &c.

GRIT. And if the palace burn too hotly, put the flames out with the blood we shed.

TARTARS. Huzza! Plunder! Gold!

GRIT. Then for the girls.

TARTARS. Huzza!

GRIT. We offer them our hearts.

TARTARS. Huzza!

GRIT. And if they don't accept 'em kindly, why they accept them willy nilly.

TARTARS. Huzza! (*they are about to rush up the staircase when* CATHERINE *appears at the top, in a costume of a Bohemian fortune-teller, holding a small drum in her hands—the* TARTARS *draw back surprised*)

CATH. Back! back! Know you not my voice, sons of the Ukraine. Know you not the voice of the daughter of Vlasta!

TARTARS. Vlasta!

GRIT. She was of our tribe and our blood.

CATH. Over this roof, even after dark, her august spirit condescends to watch. Enter, then, sons of the Ukraine, but as friends—evil on him who dares forget to respect the shade of Vlasta, who forgets that in her daughter's house he is a welcome guest! Enter, sons of the Ukraine. (*they are about to enter—she takes* GRITZENKO'S *hand*) Born a peasant, beneath another flag—in the ranks of the Imperial Guard—thou shalt rise to the grade of——

GRIT. What!

CATH. Corporal! (*solemnly*) That is, if thy sword is never drawn except in defence of the feeble and the weak.

Music—CATHERINE *sounds the drum—the* TARTARS *follow her off*, R.—GEORGE *and* PRASCOVIA *appear at cottage.*

GEORGE. They're gone! Hurra! Now, Prascovia, run and find your uncle. I'll go to the minister. (*embracing her*)

PRAS. Can't you wait till we're married?

GEORGE. Better make hay while the sun shines. One is never sure of to-morrow!

Exit GEORGE *and* PRASCOVIA, L.—CATHERINE *returns*, R.

CATH. I breathe again. A trumpet-call compelled them to join the main body of their army. (*she sits on a settle*—PETER *advances to her slowly from* L. U. E.)

PETER. Catherine!

CATH. Ah! I congratulate you.

PETER. On what?

CATH. You had more patience than I gave you credit for. You were there; you remained quiet and immovable, your hatchet in your hand, ready to cut the head off of the first Tartar who offered to touch me.

PETER. Who told you that?

CATH. I read it in your eyes.

PETER. You reproached me for being impetuous—furious. You see I can contain myself.

CATH. Yes; if you had always some one near you who knew and understood your character, and prevented you from committing follies—there, again!

PETER. No, no—you are right; but never, till I met you, did any one dare to tell me this!

CATH. That should prove to you that never till you met me have you met a friend.

PETER. True—not one!

CATH. (*holding out her hand to him*) But me! Come—make me your confidante; tell me all!

PETER. All—all what?

CATH. About yourself.

PETER. (*smiling*) About myself! That's not so easy.

CATH. From what town do you come?

PETER. From Moscow.

CATH. What trade was your father?

PETER. (*embarrassed*) What trade? The same as mine.

CATH. Then he was a carpenter.

PETER. What he was possessed of he left to me when he died.

CATH. What—his home?

PETER. That was in a very tumble-down condition, and wanted putting in thorough repair.

CATH. Better pull it down, then, and build another up quite new.

PETER. I wished to do so—but first one obstacle, then another——

CATH. Obstacle! You have no power of will. I have; with me, to have the will is to have the power.

PETER. (*interested*) What?

CATH. To have the will is to have the power. You'll never be a good workman.

PETER. Not a good carpenter, I'm afraid.

CATH. Be something else. I wish it—I will it!

PETER. You will it?

CATH. Yes; and with me, to have the will is to have the power. Become a soldier.

PETER. A soldier!

CATH. Obtain an epaulette—and, Peter, I am yours!

PETER. (*with inspiration*) Catherine, if ever renown and glory should be mine, 'tis to thy noble, glorious words I shall owe all!

CATH. Glory waits thee in the battle field, renown shall attend thee in the council. My mother foretold that my husband should be a great man—a hero! You shall be my husband.

PETER. I will be all you wish. Take this. (*giving her a ring*) Keep it for my sake. Oh! I would stay always here; but no, thy love inspires me. Honours wait me hence—my heart stays here. I go, with thy words engraven on my heart, "To have the will is to have the power."

Exit PETER, L. 1 E.—CATHERINE *wipes a tear away.*

CATH. A tear: no matter, he saw it not.

PRASCOVIA *and* GEORGE *run on*, L. U. E.

GEORGE. Everything is ready for the marriage, everybody is ready——

PRAS. (*in bride's dress*) Except the bridegroom. Look, I'm dressed already, but you——

GEORGE. I've had so much to do. I've seen your Uncle Reynolds. I've told the people who are to meet us at church. I've told everybody; and in half-an-hour the violins will be here for the bridegroom.

PRAS. Who won't be even dressed to receive them.

GEORGE. I'm going, my darling Pras——

CATH. Go then.

GEORGE. I'm going. Bless you, Prascovia, I'll go and get dressed. (*goes up staircase*)

PRAS. (*gaily*) I've got something to tell you; the old burgomaster who is so fond of you, seeing me dressed for the wedding, looked at me so—now you needn't be jealous—he asked me to give you this letter, to you only. (*laughing*) It's a *billet doux* from the old burgomaster. What fun!

CATH. Read it, I have no secrets from you.

PRAS. (*opening letter*) Me read it? What fun! (*reads a few lines*) Great heaven!

CATH. What's the matter?

PRAS. (*reading*) "The Muscovite officers have made a levy "on the town of twelve recruits, and the burgomaster advises "you as a friend, that if you don't find a substitute for George, "whose name is on the list——

CATH. (*snatching letter and finishing it*) "He will leave us to-"night a soldier."

PRAS. (*angrily*) Leave us to-night? It's shameful!—it's villainous!—a young man who is just going to be married.

CATH. Hush, or George may hear you.

PRAS. (*crying*) If the wedding had only been over! Oh oh, oh!

CATH. (*after thinking for a moment*) Don't cry, child, you shall be married!

PRAS. (*drying her eyes*) Shall I though! Perhaps they'll give him leave for an hour. (*laughing*) Then I shall be married, George will be mine—he'll then leave me an hour afterwards. (*crying*) Oh, oh!

CATH. Dry your eyes. They may perhaps grant him leave for some few days.

PRAS. A few days? How many?

CATH. Five or six.

PRAS. Then he'll have to go away on Sunday.

CATH. Perhaps twelve or fourteen.

PRAS. (*quickly*) Thank heaven! Then we shall have time to——

CATH. To what?

PRAS. To bid each other good-bye.

CATH. But at the end of that time George must replace his substitute.

PRAS. Substitute? Do you think that you can find one?

CATH. I do; one about his height.

PRAS. But the burgomaster?

CATH. I will obtain his connivance. If I am not at the wedding do not wait for me; I will join you——

PRAS. At the church. (*embracing her*) Oh, my dear sister! What can repay such goodness—such devotion?

CATH. Your and my brother's happiness. See—the guests.

Exit CATHERINE *into house*, R.

Music.—Enter WEDDING GUESTS, *with the* BRIDE'S FATHER, REYNOLDS; GEORGE *appears on staircase in his shirt sleeves.*

GEORGE. How are you, friends? I'll be with you in a minute; as soon as I've got my coat on.

Drums.—REYNOLDS *and his* FRIENDS *drink*—SOLDIERS *lead on a number of* RECRUITS *at back*—GEORGE *comes on stage*—BRIDESMAIDS *place on* PRASCOVIA'S *head the crown and veil, others give her the bouquet*—CATHERINE *enters, wrapped up in a cloak, she joins the other* RECRUITS. *Music changes.* GEORGE, PRASCOVIA, *and* BRIDAL PARTY *kneel in front—the* RECRUITS *mount the jetty—the vessel that is to carry them away appears.*

CATH. (*on jetty*) Watch over them, heaven! Mother, I fulfil thy wishes;—my brother will be happy. Heaven guard them!

Music.—The WEDDING PARTY *go off as if to church*, L.—GEORGE *keeps looking for* CATHERINE.

GEORGE. Where's Catherine?

PRAS. She'll meet us at the church.

CATH. (*getting into the ship with the other* RECRUITS) Heaven guard them!

(*as the party file off to the church, the vessel moves off slowly*—CATHERINE *sends a last kiss of adieu to her brother.—Tableau*)

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

ACT II.

SCENE.—*A Mountainous Country; tree in* C. *of stage; a Russian Encampment; sentry box,* R.; SOLDIERS, CAVALRY, INFANTRY, ARTILLERY, *grouped about the stage; arms piled; gun-carriages, &c.*; NATHALIE, EKIMVRIA, *and other* VIVANDIERES *discovered waltzing with* SOLDIERS. *Music—Enter* GRITZENKO—*the waltzing ceases.* CATHERINE *and other* RECRUITS *march on stage—they go through the exercise, commanded by* GRITZENKO.

GRIT. Port arms! Present arms! Ground arms! Dismiss.

During this the other SOLDIERS *have gradually left the stage. When the* RECRUITS *are dismissed,* NATHALIE *and* EKIMVRIA *offer them brandy, &c., which they accept.* CATHERINE *places the gun against sentry-box, and sits near tree in* C. *of stage*—RECRUITS *to waltz with the* VIVANDIERES—GRITZENKO *walks to and fro, examining* CATHERINE *attentively.*

NATH. (*to* CATHERINE) Would you like to refresh yourself, young soldier?

EKIM. Have some Geneva or Dantzic brandy.

CATH. (*smiling, to herself*) It almost seems as if I saw one of my own ghosts. They are just what I used to be.

NATH. Isn't your throat dry?

EKIM. Or is your pocket empty?

CATH. Perhaps it is. We don't often get our pay regularly in the Muscovite army.

NATH. What of that, we can give credit.

CATH. (*aside*) Just as I used to do.

EKIM. Particularly to a good-looking young fellow.

CATH. (*aside*) That's not just as I used to do.

EKIM. I only want your custom.

NATH. But I spoke first; and first come first served.

CATH. (*aside*) How the corporal keeps staring at me! Does he suspect? (*to* VIVANDIERES) You are very kind, but I always pay as I go.

NATH. Well, a handsome young soldier like you can quit all scores with a kiss.

CATH. Indeed! (*looking at* GRITZENKO) He's looking at me still. Were I to refuse, he might suspect me. (*kisses* NATHALIE *once, and* EKIMVRIA *twice*)

EKIM. You pay twice over.

NATH. (*spitefully*) How generous!

EKIM. Shall I give you one back, Mr. Soldier?

CATH. No, thank you. There's some one calling you.

NATH. I hope you'll keep your custom only for us.

EKIM. We desire a monopoly.

NATH. Particularly as it carries double payment with it.

CATH. Rely on me.

The VIVANDIERES *curtsey and exit,* L. U. E.

(*coxcombically*) I hope the corporal is satisfied now; his eyes have never wandered from me for a moment. (*she hums an air indifferently*)

GRIT. What air is that you are humming?

CATH. The Czar's March.

GRIT. It's forbidden.

CATH. Oh! very well—the Sacred March.

GRIT. That's forbidden, too. Colonel Yermaloff won't allow the regimental band to play it.

CATH. Why not?

GRIT. I don't know. A good soldier only obeys, he doesn't ask questions; he does what his superior tells him, he doesn't reason. Recruit, come here!

CATH. (*aside*) I suppose I must be passively obedient. It won't do to trifle with the discipline of the Muscovite army. (*approaching him*) Here, corporal!

GRIT. Look at me! do you hear?—look at me—perhaps it's not pleasant to look at me.

CATH. (*looking at him*) Quite the contrary, corporal!

GRIT. Well, I should think it is, since I've been shaved. By Sabrinka—my patron saint—now we're only allowed to wear a moustache and——(*looking at* CATHERINE)

CATH. What can he mean? (*aloud*) What are you looking at so earnestly?

GRIT. Your face. I can't make it out. You're as like a girl I met in Finland, in the neighbourhood of Wiborg, a suttler, as one grain of powder is to another.

CATH. A suttler! Did she carry a barrel of Dantzic—best quality?

GRIT. She did! Sabrinka!

CATH. That was my sister!

GRIT. Your sister. Now I see the reason of the likeness, the same features, the same height, good-looking—but a sort of devilish expression.

CATH. What, my sister?

GRIT. Oh, nothing against her; I only wanted to tell you that a fortnight ago, I, Corporal Gritzenko, was only a pandour in the Kalmucs of the Ukraine; not a regularly enrolled corps, but troopers who got no pay but what little plunder you could lay your hands on; and sometimes the cursed peasants are so

infernally stupid, if you pillage them at night, you can't make them disgorge again in the morning.

CATH. Why not?

GRIT. Because they've got nothing left. Sabrinka!

CATH. (*impatiently*) But my sister——

GRIT. Oh! your sister, the suttler—I mean the fortune-teller—foretold that I should enter the Imperial Guard. Her prediction is accomplished, and I am not only a soldier but a corporal. Sabrinka!

CATH. Is it possible?

GRIT. You see my stripes. Sabrinka! if it wasn't for them I should hardly believe it was true myself.

CATH. And now you are a corporal in the Imperial Guards, with six copecs a day.

GRIT. (*whispering*) More—more! Twenty—thirty—forty copecs a night!

CATH. What?

GRIT. All luck. Your sister saw it in my hand. It's a fine thing to be a corporal. Still, one has one's regrets and troubles, no matter how high one's station in life may be; now my particular regret is that I had to cut off my beard. Of course I had to do it to enter the Guard; it's the order of the Czar. I was growling about it one day, when an officer who was standing close by shook me by the hand, and said in a whisper, "Right, you are with us. Take this paper; read it." "Yes," said I. Of course, in obedience to orders, I took the paper, but I didn't read it.

CATH. Why not?

GRIT. Because I can't read—Sabrinka! But the paper contained twenty copecs which I put here. (*pointing to his jacket pocket*) Well, the next evening the same officer passed rapidly by me, and said to me, "Did you execute my orders?" "Yes," said I, "as well as I could." "Good," said he; "continue the good work;" and he gave me another paper containing thirty copecs; and last night he gave me forty. "For the same destination," whispered he. "For the same?" said I. And I put 'em with the others; but very soon there'll be no more room. Sabrinka!

CATH. Have you kept the papers?

GRIT. Yes.

CATH. But you shouldn't do that; they'll take up too much room.

GRIT. So they do; I never thought of that. (*takes them from his pocket, and is about to tear them*)

CATH. (*stopping him*) Stop! I can tell you what's in them, because I know how to read.

GRIT. (*astonished*) Do you know how to read?

CATH. Yes.

GRIT. And you don't know your exercise? Sabrinka!—You'll make a queer soldier. Well, what does it say?

CATH. (*reading*) "Bounty for Corporal Gritzenko."

GRIT. Of course, I guessed that; so that the art of reading is of no use at all.

CATH. "Ten copecs a day for each soldier that the corporal "enrols in our enterprise." What enterprise?

GRIT. Silence! Here's the colonel!—salute! (*they both salute*)

Enter COLONEL YERMALOFF *and* OFFICERS, L. U. E.

YERM. (*aloud*) Corporal! (*whispering*) Does all go well?

GRIT. (*straight and motionless whenever addressed by an officer*) Yes, colonel.

YERM. (*whispering*) Have we more friends?

GRIT. Yes, colonel.

YERM. (*pointing to* CATHERINE, *who salutes*) Is that young soldier one of them?

GRIT. Yes, colonel; he's a recruit.

YERM. Good. Let him remain near this spot. Tell the major that General Tcheremetoff is about to pass the regiment in review. GRITZENKO *salutes and exit*, L. U. E.

CATH. (*aside*) What can all this mean? (*she goes up stage*)

Enter ISMAILOFF, THERSHKIN, *and several* OFFICERS *of cavalry, infantry, and artillery—they speak to each other in whispers.*

THERS. What news, colonel?

YERM. The Czar has just issued a proclamation.

ISMAIL. Addressed to us, though oddly enough, the Czar is unknown to any here.

YERM. True, he has never yet honoured this division of the Russian army with his presence.

ISMAIL. What says the proclamation?

YERM. It establishes the use of the knout in the army for officers as well as soldiers.

ISMAIL. Impossible! (*general indignation*)

YERM. Yet if it be so, shall we submit?

ALL Never!

ISMAIL. We have endured enough already. The haughty tyrant has trampled on us till he has roused a spirit of vengeance, deep as it is implacable.

THERS. The knout! For us! for officers! Death were preferable! (*all concur*)

YERM. Right, my friends, this act of tyranny shall be his last!

ISMAIL. Agreed! We swear it! (*all touch their swords*)

An OFFICER *enters at back, and intimates that the* GENERAL *is coming—the* OFFICERS *range in line—music, drums, trumpets* —GENERAL TCHEREMETOFF *and* STAFF *enter—the* REGIMENT *passes in review before him—grand military spectacle—the* TROOPS *defile before the* GENERAL, *who before he exits, gives orders to some* SOLDIERS, *then calls to* GRITZENKO, *who salutes him, and after he has gone off with his* STAFF *remains stiff and motionless.*

GRIT. The General-in-Chief to speak to me! What an honour! (SOLDIERS *erect a tent in* C. *of stage*) He promised me twenty blows with his own cane, with his own hand, if his orders are not executed. What an honour! Sabrinka! Quick, you rascals, (*to* SOLDIERS) or I'll give you on the spot, ready money, what the general promised me.

Enter CATHERINE *and two* RECRUITS, *guns on their shoulders, from back,* R.

CATH. What's that, corporal?

GRIT. A tent which the general has ordered to be pitched on this spot for the superior officers.

CATH. What officers?

GRIT. I don't know. Port arms!

CATH. What for?

GRIT. Don't ask questions, but obey. Port arms! My orders are to place three sentries round this tent.

CATH. Three!

GRIT. Don't ask questions, but obey. You before the tent. You to the left. (*to* CATHERINE) You to the right. (*aside to* CATHERINE) As you are under my protection, I permit you to march from the tent to the sentry-box and back again, all the night till you're relieved.

CATH. But if I should die of cold?

GRIT. Don't ask questions. To your posts! March!

(*the two* RECRUITS *go behind tent*—GRITZENKO *exits*, L. U. E.—CATHERINE *remains near sentry-box—the* SOLDIERS *have by this time erected a large and handsome tent, occupying two-thirds of the stage; the tent open only to the audience, the sides and back closed; the interior of the tent is richly decorated; an elegant supper is laid out*—CATHERINE *marches between the tent and sentry-box—the other* SENTRY *appears from time to time behind tent*)

CATH. (*leaning on her gun*) There is something in the wind! Oh! if I were ambitious—if I were a man! As it is, I am but a poor girl, whom my brother George, in the midst of his happiness, will soon forget. I, who think only of him—and of one other—ah! (*sighing*) Sentry, to your post! (*she goes into sentry-box*)

TCHEREMETOFF, PETER, DANILOVITZ, *as officers, and two* AIDES-DE-CAMP, *enter the tent from the back.*

TCHEREM. I did not anticipate this sudden arrival. (*turning to* PETER) Two superior officers were announced to me—but I am so surprised——

PETER. You are not the only one I mean to take by surprise. Remember that I am only Captain Peter Michaeloff, who brings you tidings that the Swedish army by daybreak to-morrow will surround you. You have advanced too far.

TCHEREM. Dare I inform you that you perhaps have listened to a false report——

PETER. (*brusquely*) I have seen myself, and so has Danilovitz Mensikoff, my new aide-de-camp.

DANIL. (*saluting*) Yes, General!

PETER. But that is not the only danger.

TCHEREM. Indeed!

PETER. A spirit of sedition and revolt is spreading in the division under your command. Have you perceived it?

TCHEREM. No. Every soldier in the ranks is devoted to the Czar.

PETER. (*looking at him*) Will you answer for them?

TCHEREM. With my head!

PETER. I accept the surety; but that will not prevent me from using every precaution.

DANIL. Suppose we sit down to table. You must be dying of thirst, Captain.

PETER. (*brusquely*) I do not allow Peter to lose his reason, unless the Czar has no occasion for his brains. I ordered a regiment of the Grenadiers of Tobolsk to meet me here by forced marches. Have they arrived?

TCHEREM. No, Sire. (*recollecting*) No, Captain.

PETER. I expect, too, to-night, a division of Tartars. Have they arrived?

TCHEREM. No, Captain. (*a pause*)

DANIL. (*impatiently*) Captain, it will all get cold.

PETER. (*brusquely*) Silence, or I'll send you to Siberia!

DANIL. Forgive me—but the supper.

PETER. And the supper too.

DANIL. (*aside*) That won't be the way to warm it up again.

PETER. (*to the two* AIDES-DE-CAMP) Gentleman, we shall not sup together this evening. To horse. Let the divisions I expect be here by daybreak—they must, you understand.

They salute and exit at back of tent.

PETER. (*gaily to* DANILOVITZ) Now, Danilovitz, good night to business.

DANIL. *(gaily)* Now for supper, I've an appetite like a Cossack.

PETER. And I'm thirsty enough to drink up the Neva. *(to* TCHEREMETOFF) I'll have no officers to wait upon me. That would give too much importance to Captain Peter. As I passed through the camp I saw some pretty girls, with barrels on their shoulders, send a couple here.

TCHEREM. *(scandalised)* Vivandieres!

DANIL. So long as they are pretty, Master Peter, don't care what they are.

PETER. *(aside to* DANILOVITZ) I love a Vivandiere—I have a grateful memory. They recall the image of my Catherine.

TCHEREMETOFF *salutes and exits at back*—CATHERINE *marches to and fro.*

PETER. Well, Lieutenant.

DANIL. Well, Captain.

PETER. How like you your new life?

DANIL. Why, I'm getting more used to it—at first my head spun with it.

PETER. And to-night it shall spin round more than ever. You don't know how to drink.

DANIL. Not at present; but near your Majesty I shall have plenty of practice.

PETER. I defy you to drink with me.

DANIL. I accept the challenge.

PETER. To begin then—drink! *(they eat and drink)*

CATH. *(listening)* What noise is that in the tent? *(looking round her)* No one is looking. I know a soldier at his post has no right to be curious; but when that soldier is a woman, it's a very different thing. (CATHERINE *looks through crevice in tent)*

PETER. Another bottle!

DANIL. I'm for you.

CATH. Great Heaven! Danilovitz, the pastrycook, and the other——*(she leans on her musket for support)* Peter! Peter in the uniform of a captain—so rapid a promotion. *(with pride)* I knew it would be so.

PETER. Drink—fill again!

CATH. Yes, 'tis he—there is no longer any doubt. No one else could drink as he does. It's disgusting.

PETER. You don't fill fairly. You're afraid that I should beat you.

DANIL. No, the bottle's out.

PETER. Another! Another!

DANIL. I'm afraid, Captain, it will get into your head.

PETER. Uncork the bottle, or I'll crack it on your head.

CATH. Oh yes, 'tis he! He's quarrelling! Disgusting.

PETER. To the brim! Let the ruby juice laugh in the crystal. To Catherine!

CATH. That's not quite so disgusting! I forgive him that glass.

SENTRY *appears behind tent.*

CATH. (*seeing him*) The other sentinel. I don't think he saw me. (*she marches back to sentry-box*—EKIMVRIA *and* NATHALIE *enter tent*)

DANIL. (*drinking*) I don't know whether I see double; but I think I see two pretty little vivandieres.

PETER. You see right enough, one of them is the very image of Catherine!

DANIL. And the other?

PETER. The other is the image of Catherine too.

DANIL. He thinks he sees that girl everywhere.

PETER. Your names, my turtle-doves?

EKIM. Ekimvria.

NATH. And Nathalie.

EKIM. } (*together*) Both very much at your service.
NATH. }

PETER. Come here.

CATHERINE *is coming from the sentry-box to approach the tent when* GRITZENKO *appears at back with a* PATROL; *she retires;* PATROL *crosses the stage.*

PETER. Sit down, my dears. (*one sits on a drum near* PETER, *the other near* DANILOVITZ—*they make love to them, both getting very drunk*)

PETER. Give us a song, my darlings, sing to us—sing—fill for me, then sing.

EKIM. What shall we sing?

NATH. A romance?

EKIM. A ballad?

PETER. What you please, but sing, and lieutenant, listen.

Duet.

EKIM. Where the Kremlin's ramparts stand,
Two Cossacks brave, their swords in hand,
For a bottle of wine they fought;
And they fought for a lovely maid—
She lovely as a poet's thought.
"It's sparkling as her eyes," they said;
"Ah! who shall win the prize," they cried!
(*imitating a combat*) "Ah, ah, ah, ah, ah, ah, ah, ah!
'Twixt us the sword shall soon decide."

NATH. A soldier old who saw the fray,
Cried out " Let chance decide the day.
Throw dice for the bottle of wine—
Throw—throw for the lovely maid.
(*imitating throwing dice*)
Let no blood be spilt of thine;
Take an old man's advice," he said.
Who now shall win the prize, they cried,
'Twixt us the dice shall soon decide.

EKIM. The contest over, nothing loth,
NATH. Each found that they were victors both.
EKIM. One won the bottle of wine,
But shared not with his comrade. Strange!
NATH. The other won the maid divine,
And asked his comrade to exchange.
BOTH. A handsome, brave young Grenadier,
Told us the story now you hear.

CATHERINE *during the song has approached the tent and looked through—she is transfixed.*

DANIL. A capital song. One got the woman and t'other got the wine.

PETER. I would have taken both. (*embracing* NATHALIE *and* EKIMVRIA)

CATH. (*with a sharp cry*) Great heaven, my jealousy will choke me. (*day begins to break; an* OFFICER *enters the tent;* GRITZENKO *and* PATROL *re-cross the stage*)

OFFICER. To Captain Peter Michaeloff—from the General.

PETER. (*drunk*) Go to the devil. (*to* DANILOVITZ) Read it!

DANIL. (*after having read*) What! (*to* PETER) Come.

PETER. I shan't. I shall stay where I am.

DANIL. Great Heaven! (*looking at* PETER, *frightened*)

PETER. Go—go and act for me. I shall stop here, I am very comfortable.

DANILOVITZ *exits with* OFFICER, *leaving* PETER *with the* VIVANDIERES—GRITZENKO *and* PATROL, *after having relieved the* SENTRY *at the back of the tent, march towards* CATHERINE.

CATH. Now he is alone with them.

GRIT. (*seeing her*) What the devil! Playing the spy on a superior officer! Hallo, we've come to relieve you.

CATH. I'll stay where I am.

GRIT. You must go with us.

CATH. No, I'll stay here—I'll die here!

GRIT. But discipline.

CATH. I don't care for it.

GRIT. Sabrinka, you must come with me. (*he seizes her, she slaps his face*)

CATH. Leave me alone.

GRIT. Sabrinka! Strike a corporal! Arrest him.

Several SOLDIERS *rush on stage,* EKIMVRIA *opens curtains of tent on the* R.

EKIM. What noise is that? (PETER *is holding his glass for* NATHALIE *to fill*)

GRIT. (*seeing* PETER) A captain! The very man I wanted. (*entering tent*) Justice, Captain, justice! (SOLDIERS *drag* CATHERINE *into tent*)

PETER. (*completely drunk*) What do you want? Speak quickly.

GRIT. I have just received a blow from a recruit. I—a corporal—Corporal Gritzenko.

PETER. Let him be shot directly.

GRIT. (*to* SOLDIERS *who surround* CATHERINE) Quick march.

CATH. (*running to* PETER) Do you not know my voice? Peter, look at me—do you not recognise me?

PETER. (*looking at her without knowing her*) Not I; let him be shot.

CATH. (*indignantly*) He is so lost he does not recognise me. Be it so—I go to death, and remember it comes from your hand, Peter, from yours.

(*at this last speech* PETER, *who is still suffering from the fumes of the wine, raises his head and drops the glass in his hand—sees* CATHERINE, *pushes* EKIMVRIA *and* NATHALIE *from him—utters a loud cry—during this the* SOLDIERS *have taken off* CATHERINE, *who exits with an expression of indignation and contempt,* R.—PETER *rises—passes his hand across his forehead as if to collect his thoughts—in a moment his emotion and his drunkenness seem to strive for mastery—Music—at last he recovers himself*)

PETER. (*loudly*) Stay!

GRIT. (*coming back*) What is it, captain?

PETER. (*wildly*) That face—that voice! Bring back that young soldier! (*to* GRITZENKO) I would speak with him. Run—bring him back quickly—or the knout——

GRIT. Sab—— *Runs off,* R.

Enter DANILOVITZ *at back.*

DANIL. Sire.

PETER. (*going to him*) Danilovitz, have you seen her? What news?

DANIL. General Tcheremetoff now says that he cannot answer for the fidelity of the army. He is sure that the conspirators will break out into open revolt the moment that the enemy arrives.

PETER. (*his hand to his forehead*) Conspirators—enemy!

DANIL. He knows nothing of the details of the plot, but the name of their leader.

PETER. (*impatiently*) Who spoke of plots? I spoke of Catherine.

DANIL. Catherine?

PETER. Her form—her image appeared before me, as if to recall to reason my scattered senses.

DANIL. (*shrugging his shoulders*) I am now engaged on too important business to think about a woman.

Enter GRITZENKO, R.

PETER. Well—that young soldier?

GRIT. (*embarrassed*) I arrived in time—they were loading their muskets—the young soldier was writing very quietly—he knows how to write—he understands writing better than he does discipline.

PETER. (*angrily*) Go on!

GRIT. Yes, captain. I cried out "Stop!" and I brought him here, and here he is—that is he would be there—only as we came by the river, he slid a piece of paper into my hand, jumped into the stream——

PETER. Ah!

GRIT. And swam like a fish——

PETER. You allowed him to escape!

GRIT. Captain—I——

PETER. The paper—give it me. (*taking it from him*) Go.

GRIT. (*saluting*) Yes, general. (*aside*) I don't think the poor devil did escape. I took a good aim at him. (*imitating taking aim with his gun*)

PETER. (*opening letter, gives an enclosure to* DANILOVITZ *and takes the other*) A ring—her ring—the one I gave to Catherine—'twas she! (*reading*) "You have forgotten me; "all is over; I shall never see you more. The revenge I take "is to leave you a fortune. You are now only a captain: "carry these papers to the Czar, and he can refuse you "nothing. Catherine."

DANIL. (*reading his paper*) The details of the plot—the names of the conspirators! Sire! do you hear? sire!

PETER. Catherine is no more. (*overwhelmed*) Adieu, my guardian angel and my guiding star!

Enter YERMALOFF *and* OFFICERS—*they sign to others who enter.*

DANIL. Colonel Yermaloff and the ringleaders of the plot. (*going to* PETER *who sits* L., *overwhelmed by grief*) Sire, we are surrounded by our enemies.

PETER. (*raising his head*) Do you feel fear?

DANIL. Only for your majesty.

YERM. (*advancing*) They are not of our division. (*to* PETER *and* DANILOVITZ) Are you for or against us?

DANIL. For you, colonel.

YERM. Do you bring any news?

DANIL. We do.

YERM. What news?

PETER. (*rising brusquely*) That the Czar has arrived. (DANILOVITZ *restrains him*)

YERM. He is too late.

PETER. Not too late to punish you.

DANIL. Two regiments still faithful.

YERM. Those two regiments are still far away. The Swedes are ready, and the whole camp will rise as one man at the appointed signal.

DANIL. And what is that?

YERM. The sound of the Czar's March.

PETER. The Sacred March?

YERM. At the signal the Swedes will enter that part of the camp which we have left unguarded, then they will join us.

Enter SOLDIERS *and take away tent—enter* OFFICERS, SOLDIERS, VIVANDIERES, *&c.*

THERSH. A rumour runs in the camp that the Czar is here.

SOLDIERS. Death to the tyrant!

DANIL. Sire!

PETER. Be firm.

YERM. (*to* PETER) You were right then. Join us. Too long have we groaned beneath the brutal tyranny of him we execrate. If he be here—the tyrant shall fall beneath our swords! (SOLDIERS *shout*)

PETER. Oh, heaven take my life, but save my country! (*after a pause, the Sacred March is heard behind the scenes*)

YERM. Now, comrades, join our friends! (*the* SOLDIERS *are about to rush off, when* PETER *whom* DANILOVITZ *tries in vain to hold, throws him off and rushes* C.)

PETER. Hold! soldiers, you are deceived! You are betrayed! What, for the sake of vengeance on one man, will you sell your country to the stranger—will you endure a foreign yoke? No! at the very sight of the standard of the foe, you will forget your personal hate, and rush to repel them. Eternal shame on those who now desert me! (*snatching a standard*) Follow me, to the charge beneath this noble flag, and after we have conquered the base horde who dare attack us, alone, unarmed, the Czar shall meet the death you destine him.

YERM. You promise to yield the Czar into our hands? Who, then are you?

PETER. The Czar, himself! Now strike! (*a pause*) Come friends, comrades. I will forget the past in the headlong fury of the battle. Your Czar pardons you. Will you fight for him? (*holding up standard*—SOLDIERS *all kneel to him round it—picture—march behind scenes*)

ALL. The Swedes! The Swedes! We are surprised!

PETER. No, they are *my* regiments, who come to combat by your side.

(*A* TARTAR REGIMENT *descends mountain*, R.—*a* REGIMENT *of the* GRENADIERS *of Smolensko come down the mountain*, L.—*sound of cannon heard—picture*)

PETER. The battle has begun. Forward, comrades! for your country and for your Czar!

(*loud shouts—a* HORSE *is brought*—PETER *mounts—grand picture*)

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

ACT III.

SCENE.—*A rich Apartment in the Palace of the Czar; grand window curtains at back to cover in the scene; a door*, R., *door*, L. *On an arm-chair*, R., *a carpenter's axe and costume; a table, with writing materials. All very rich.*

PETER *discovered seated near table.*

PETER. 'Tis vain. I cannot by rude labour fly the recollection that pursues me. Oh, Catherine, when you avowed your love for me, I was indeed a king. Now that you are lost to me, I would give up crown, sceptre, glory, all—all for you. Oh, heaven! take my throne and give me happiness and Catherine. Who's there?

Enter DANILOVITZ *from* L.

Danilovitz, approach. It is another proof of the favour with which I regard you that I allow you to enter here. You are the only one who——

DANIL. I know it, sire, and I should believe myself in the cabinet of the Czar of Russia, did not this dress and the axe recal to my memory Peter the carpenter. (*showing them*)

PETER. Look there (*pointing to* R. *door*) on that retired corner of the palace.

DANIL. (*looking from door*) Great heaven! Your carpenter's bench and Catherine's house exactly as it was at Wiborg.

PETER. I love to surround myself with recollections of the past.

DANIL. And on the other side (*smiling*) there's my pastrycook's shop—Danilovitz, Pastrycook.

PETER. Now, Colonel Mensikoff, the favourite of the Emperor.

DANIL. An honour I owe less to my own merit than to Catherine the suttler.

PETER. How so?

DANIL. It is only to me, sire, that you can speak of her.

PETER. True. Oh! I must despair, our researches have proved useless—she is dead—Catherine is dead.

DANIL. (*slowly*) No, sire, she is not dead.

PETER. What?

DANIL. I know she's not. I am sure she is not.

PETER. (*embracing him*) Friend, companion, Danilovitz, now a general, you shall be a prince—Prince Mensikoff—you shall be my Minister. Tell me, you have good news for me.

DANIL. Sire, I did not say good news.

PETER. You said she still lived.

DANIL. Yes, but perhaps lost to you, sire.

PETER. Lost to me! (*enraged*) Has she, then, forgotten me. Yes, she is another's. I'll have revenge! Woe to her. Woe to my rival—woe to thee.

DANIL. Ah, yes, Siberia for me—Siberia for your favourite, Mensikoff—whose good fortune lasted so short a time.

PETER. Forgive me, my rage blinded me, and——

DANIL. Ah! Catherine was right, "Peter can command everyone——"

PETER. (*annoyed*) Except himself. I will prove that she was wrong. (*looking at papers in* DANILOVITZ'S *hand*) What papers are those?

DANIL. Ukases, that require your Majesty's signature.

PETER. (*controlling himself*) Good! The state first—my own private troubles after. (*seating himself*)

DANIL. For the army?

PETER. (*reads and sits*) Good!

DANIL. Ukase, respecting the beard of your Majesty's subjects.

PETER. (*reading*) "For the whole empire?"

DANIL. I am told that this excites great discontent—even revolt.

PETER. (*signing*) No matter! I will compel them to look civilised, spite of themselves.

DANIL. Ukase prepared according to your Majesty's order

on the Russian alphabet and grammar. Your Majesty will surely not trouble yourself with that?

PETER. A Czar must trouble himself with everything. The alphabet used to contain forty-three letters; by an imperial decree, I suppress 9, that leaves 34, and quite enough too. (*reading another paper*) "Lieutenant Zonbeff condemned to death." (*stopping*) So brave an officer. (*reading on*) "For having struck his colonel." (*signing directly*) He must die! (*reading on*) "Being at the time in a state of intoxication." (*stopping embarrassed*) Umph—intoxication.

DANIL. You have signed, sire.

PETER. I have. Publish the condemnation, and this evening——

DANIL. Execute it?

PETER. No, ask the Emperor to pardon him, and he will exercise his imperial clemency. (*a pause*) You see I am calm now—quite calm, you can tell me all. Catherine, Does she love another?

DANIL. No, sire.

PETER. But you said——

DANIL. That I knew nothing positive, but that I was on her track.

PETER. Who's there? Who dares, without my order, enter here?

DANIL. A grenadier of the guard. I have been placing sentries round your apartments and at the entrance of this pavilion.

GRITZENKO, C. *from* L., *enters, stiff and straight, and salutes* PETER.

GRIT. (*trembling and saluting all the time*) 'Tis the Czar!

PETER. What do you want?

GRIT. Yes, sire.

PETER. What brings you here?

GRIT. Yes, sire.

PETER. What have you to say to me?

GRIT. Yes, sire.

PETER. Do you understand me.

GRIT. No, sire. I—I'm afraid.

PETER. I forbid you to be afraid. Speak!

GRIT. Yes, sire. (*quickly*) A number of carpenters from the environs of Wiborg, in Finland, are at the palace gates, and say that they have been sent for to the new town of Saint Petersburgh, by order of the Czar. (*he takes a long breath*) Yes, sire.

PETER. (*to* DANILOVITZ) My fellow workmen at the

carpenter's bench, I ordered them to come. Give admission to all who come from Finland.

GRIT. Yes, sire.

PETER. (*to* DANILOVITZ) Hereafter will I tell you why I I have brought them here. (*to* GRITZENKO) Do you want aught else with me? Speak.

GRIT. Yes, sire. I am a corporal, please your majesty, well known and respected in the corps, and I wish to—to—to—to——(*embarrassed*) For—for——

PETER. Well—well?

GRIT. For promotion. (*a long breath again*) Yes, sire.

PETER. Promotion. (*laughing*) On what grounds?

DANIL. (*to* GRITZENKO) Speak, he is in a good humour now.

GRIT. Sire, just before the last battle, I, like a devoted subject as I am, received——

PETER. A wound?

GRIT. No, a slap in the head from a young recruit, whom I had placed as sentry near your tent.

PETER. (*enraged*) Yes, I remember, you then were the cause of all!

GRIT. I am proud to say I was, sire. The name of the recruit was George Skarovinski, and he struck me on the cheek—me, Corporal Gritzenko, his superior officer.

DANIL. (*aside to* GRITZENKO) Silence. His majesty is angry.

GRIT. No doubt at the want of discipline on the part of the young rascal. Of course strict discipline must be observed—strict discipline required that he should be shot. He was ordered to be shot, but the Czar believes that he escaped.

PETER. Ah! did he escape?

GRIT. No, sire, I am proud to say that he did not.

PETER. Where is he? What became of him? Speak—speak!

GRIT. Yes, sire. As we were marching him to execution he sprang into the river, I presented my musket at him—took a good aim—the bullet flew——

PETER. Ah! Did it hit him?

GRIT. I am proud to say I think it did, sire.

PETER. Did it kill him?

GRIT. I am sorry to say I think not.

DANIL. (*aside to* GRITZENKO) Silence, or dread his anger.

GRIT. I understand the Czar is angry that I didn't shoot him dead?

PETER. (*in a fury*) Hence—away!

GRIT. I took the best aim I could.

PETER. (*seizes the adze, and is about to strike* GRITZENKO, *when* DANILOVITZ *interposes*) Dog!

DANIL. (*taking it from him*) Sire!

GRIT. (*aside*) If this is one of his majesty's good humours, I wonder what he is like when he is in a bad one.

PETER. Listen!

GRIT. (*saluting*) Yes, sire.

PETER. If that young soldier is now dead——

GRIT. Yes, sire.

PETER. Or if he is not found by to-morrow——

GRIT. Yes, sire.

PETER. I shall order you to be shot.

GRIT. Yes, sire.

PETER. Shot. You understand?

GRIT. Yes, sire.

PETER. Come, Mensikoff.

Exeunt PETER *and* DANILOVITZ, R.

GRIT. I understand the reason of the Czar's anger. He is annoyed at the breach of discipline. He is annoyed that the young recruit, George Skarovinski, of the regiment of Novorogod, after having struck his superior officer, was not shot. For the sake of discipline and good example, I must have somebody shot—I must find somebody to be shot. Somebody must be shot, but that somebody must not be me—Sabrinka!

Enter GEORGE *and* PRASCOVIA, *from* L.

Who goes there? Who are you? Where do you come from?

PRAS. We come from Finland.

GEORGE. On foot, sir.

GRIT. From Finland?—good. The Czar's commands are that all are to be admitted who come from the environs of Wiborg.

PRAS. That is where we come from.

GRIT. Are you a carpenter, then, like all the others?

GEORGE. Carpenter?—no; I'm a soldier: George Skarovinski.

PRAS. Of the regiment of Novorogod.

GRIT. George Skarovinski—Novorogod—third battalion?

GEORGE. Yes, sir.

GRIT. Third company?

PRAS. Yes, corporal. Show him your papers.

GRIT. (*taking papers which he does not read*) Exactly. All right; you're my man—the very man—the real man—except that you're not a bit like him. Your papers are all right.

GEORGE. I arrived here much later than I intended. I've run night and day after the regiment of Novorogod. They had left the field of battle, and she—I mean he—George Skarovinski, of the third battalion, was not to be heard of;

so I told everybody that I was George Skarovinski; and at last an aide-de-camp of the Czar's, hearing me mention my name, arrested me and my wife, treated us with the most profound respect, and conducted us to the palace here at Saint Petersburg. Do you understand?

GRIT. No, I don't.

GEORGE. I am George Skarovinski. I come in place of the other one——

GRIT. You've come just in time.

GEORGE. And I beg of you to take me for him.

GRIT. With the greatest pleasure, I accept you. I suppose the Czar won't mind particularly who it is.

PRAS. Not he.

GEORGE. No, not he—the other George—is me. I'm responsible for him.

GRIT. And for all that he has done.

PRAS. Yes; for all that he did he's responsible.

GEORGE. Yes, I'm responsible.

GRIT. (*feeling his cheek*) Sabrinka! 'Twas you then who——

GEORGE. So you see I'm ready to——

GRIT. You must make ready to be shot!

GEORGE. Shot!

PRAS. Oh, heaven!

GRIT. You must be shot twice. Once for desertion, and the second time for having given me a slap on the head.

PRAS. } You?
GEORGE. }

GRIT. I must go and make my report to the Czar. Do you wait here.

GEORGE. }
PRAS. } But—here—Corporal——

GRIT. Shot! *Exit*, R.

GEORGE. Shot!

PRAS. Shot! For what? Do you know?

GEORGE. I do not.

PRAS. Shot! and you've only been married a fortnight! It's shameful! Let's run away!

GEORGE. But where?

PRAS. Here! (*they go to door*, L.—*a* GRENADIER *appears*)

GREN. You cannot pass. (*they go to door*, R.)

Enter DANILOVITZ—PRASCOVIA *runs frightened to* GEORGE.

PRAS. Oh!

GEORGE. What's the matter?

PRAS. That colonel—that general! It's Danilovitz, the pastrycook!

DANIL. (*who has been busied in thought, recognises them*)

Great heaven! (*to* SOLDIERS *at door*) Arrest those prisoners, and do not lose sight of them.

PRAS. His voice.

GEORGE. But it can't be—those are not his clothes.

DANIL. (*to them*) What's the matter?

PRAS. } Nothing, my lord, nothing.
GEORGE. }

GEORGE. You see it isn't him. (*getting towards* L. *door*)

PRAS. Well, I know that.

GEORGE. But you said it was.

PRAS. He is something like.

GEORGE. Not much.

PRAS. Oh, the same figure!

GEORGE. He is much taller.

DANIL. (*angrily*) Go! *They exit, disputing,* L.

They are gone in good time, for here comes the Czar, and their surprise would have been still greater had they recognised his imperial majesty in the journeyman carpenter.

Enter PETER, *agitated,* R.

Sire, you seem agitated!

PETER. (*trying to console himself*) And with reason. Explain all to me, or——. Just now, in that part of the palace where you reside, I heard a voice, a voice my heart recognised at once—'twas Catherine's. She is there—Catherine with you—concealed with you.

DANIL. (*coldly*) Are you sure, sire?

PETER. (*furiously*) Sure. She sang the air that George, her brother, taught me: an air known only to her and to me. Dare you deny it now?

DANIL. No, sire; 'tis true. The peasant in whose hut she has been secreted for the last fortnight brought her to my apartments this morning.

PETER. And you dared to keep me in ignorance!

DANIL. Sire, I dared not tell you.

PETER. Dared not? Why?

DANIL. (*hesitating*) Because she is no longer herself.

PETER. What mean you?

DANIL. That the sight of your infidelity to her—her condemnation to death—her immersion in the river—the bullet-wound that she received—have destroyed her reason.

PETER. (*with a cry*) Oh, my Catherine! What projects had I formed for thee, my guide—my star!

DANIL. Time and our care may yet restore her. We have but to wait.

PETER. (*mad-headed*) I cannot wait!

DANIL. Even in her delirium she speaks of you.

PETER. Of me?

DANIL. Just now you heard her sing the air her brother George composed and taught you. Her most fixed idea is of her village——

PETER. (*with a cry of hope*) Ah!

DANIL. The roof beneath which she first met you—her brother—his wife—and all those friends whom now she calls on, yet despairs of ever seeing more.

PETER. (*his hand on his forehead*) Ah! I can save her! I will save her! Within! (*calling*) Let her be brought here.

Enter various OFFICERS *of the palace,* L.—*he gives them directions*—DANILOVITZ *remonstrating.*

PETER. (*to* DANILOVITZ *angrily*) I take all on myself. See that my orders are executed to the letter. Leave me! Leave me all!

All exeunt, L., *but* PETER, *he sinks on chair exhausted by emotion.* Catherine! Catherine! There is but this way to restore her. It may—(*rising*)—it shall—it shall! I cannot live! I will not live without her! She comes. To my task.

Exit door, L.

Enter CATHERINE, *dressed in white, from* L.

CATH. (*mad, not knowing where she is*) The night has passed, what light is this that breaks in upon me? Oh! mother, aid thy child! Where am I? (*chorus outside sing the opening chorus of Act I.*) Ah! I am dreaming yet, and the dear songs of Finland seem floating in the air—(*Music—the curtains at back are opened, and discover the scene of Act I.—the* WORKMEN *grouped exactly as in Act I.*) Great heaven! I seem to see the village! No! It cannot be! Yet 'tis the faithful shadow of my happy home. (*the glazed frames at back are taken away, and* WORKMEN *come down the stage*)

1ST WORKMAN. (*whom* CATHERINE *approaches timidly*) Now, Catherine, is your barrel out?

2ND WORKMAN. Catherine, I'll take my usual glass of rum.

ALL. (*calling*) Catherine! Catherine!

CATH. (*who stands transfixed*—WORKMAN *gives her a small keg—she starts—takes it)* Here I am, with my own barrel too. My friends, my dear friends, whom I thought I should never see again.

WORKMEN. Catherine! Catherine!

DANILOVITZ *enters,* L., *dressed as in Act I., with a tray of cakes.*

DANIL. Hot! hot! hot! All hot! They are so nice, and full of spice, that everybody buys 'em. Here you are! buy—buy—buy, they are just up! hot—hot—hot, all hot!

CATH. Danilovitz, the pastrycook. I dreamt he was an officer.

DANIL. Well, Catherine, won't you buy any cakes of me to-day? Oh, I see, you're in a hurry to get back to your brother.

CATH. (*trying to recall her senses*) My brother.

DANIL. Yes, 'tis the fête to-day for his marriage with Prascovia.

CATH. Prascovia! This marriage! Am I still dreaming, or are these the souls—the spirits of the friends I ne'er shall see again. (*Music changes*)

Enter GEORGE *and* PRASCOVIA *in wedding clothes*, L. U. E., REYNOLDS *and* GUESTS, *exactly as in Act I.—Music the same—* CATHERINE *approaches* GEORGE *and* PRASCOVIA *slowly, as if afraid to touch them, lest they should melt into air, and her dream be dispelled.*

GEORGE. (*with emotion*) Well, Catherine—why what's the matter? Are you afraid to embrace us as you always do?

PRAS. We don't wish to scold you, but you have kept us waiting a long time.

CATH. Brother! Prascovia! I can believe you—only you! Tell me—tell me the truth!

GEORGE. (*his eye on* DANILOVITZ—*aside to* PRASCOVIA) Danilovitz ordered us to lie, under pain of the displeasure of the Emperor.

CATH. Tell me. Have I—have I been mad?

GEORGE. Lord! Get along! I should think not, indeed!

CATH. (*trying to recall herself*) Again I see the camp—I see the wretch, the ingrate for whom I would have braved all—yes—I remember—I am sure of it—I saw it! Peter was unfaithful to me!

GEORGE. What, Peter? Such nonsense! He loves you too well. Why he is always coming to our house—to learn the flute, he says—but I know it's only for the sake of seeing you.

(*the air of Act I. is played on flute outside*)

CATH. That air! 'Tis he!

GEORGE. Yes; that's him!

CATH. The air that you taught him—yes. How my heart beats—how it beats—how it beats! (*with delirium*—ALL *looking at her—the music on the flute continues*)

DANIL. (*to others, aside*) Silence! Remember the Czar's commands.

Music ceases.—Enter PETER, R. U. E.—CATHERINE *turns, sees him, utters a shriek, and falls in his arms.*

CATH. 'Tis he!
DANIL. Dead!
PETER. Not so. Joy never killed a lover!

Enter OFFICERS *and* LADIES *of the Court,* R. *and* L.—*the* LADIES OF HONOUR *carry the Imperial robes, which they attach to* CATHERINE'S *shoulders—she is still fainting in* PETER'S *arms—other* LADIES *place the crown on her head—*PRASCOVIA *kneels to her, and attaches the bridal bouquet to her side—at this moment* CATHERINE *opens her eyes—she touches her robe with astonishment, feels the crown on her head.*

CATH. Oh! my mother, thy prediction is accomplished! Glory! Happiness——
PETER. (*pointing to the Audience*) Are here!
CATH. (*throwing herself into his arms*) No; they are here!
(*drums, trumpets, arms presented, and general shout of* "Long live the Empress Catherine!"

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